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Paul's Metaphors Agriculture: the Field

J. A. Davidson

The Apostle not only drew his metaphors from city life as sharing the thoughts of the Wise Master Builder he said, "Ye are God's Building". He also said to the Corinthians, "Ye are God's husbandry"; tillage; cultivated field (1 Cor. 3:9). Twelve times Paul mentions the matter of 'fruit' and in almost every Epistle gives us the thought of fruit bearing. As he journeyed he would have seen the work of the vine dresser in the vineyard and the skilful hand that grafted branches to the olive trees.

The present crisis in the agriculture industry in nearly every country serves to emphasize the principles of God's purposes in the sustaining of ordinary physical life and the oft repeated lessons from our Bible in the spiritual realm of the principle of sowing and reaping. In the drought and famines of the underdeveloped countries we live in the physical realm of man's dependence upon God for rain. In the over abundance and awful abuse of food in the western world, we see man's ungratefulness of God's goodness in providing our daily bread.

Peter learns lessons from shepherds and their sheep but Paul drew his metaphors not so much from the operations and phenomena of the natural world but from the activities and outward manifestations of human life. Thus Paul has lessons about ploughing, sowing, yield, first fruits, harvest, reaping and threshing. As he

made his long journeys by foot thought the countryside, he was sympathetic toward those who worked in the fields under the heat of the eastern sun. "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits" (2 Tim. 2:6).

Paul had his first lessons about ploughing even before he was saved because the Lord reminded the stubborn Pharisee on the road to Damascus, "It is hard to thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:5). The reference is to the ox-goads used in the operation of ploughing so that resistance increased the suffering of the restive animal, just as the force of conscience sharpened by the Spirit troubled the rebellious sinner.

When we were unsaved we brought forth "fruit unto death" (Rom. 7:5). As we look back upon our unsaved life we ask, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are not ashamed?" (Rom. 6:21). Prolonged testimony meetings which dwell at length on the details of a past sinful life are not to the Glory of God and should not be encouraged among the assemblies of the Lord's people. It is only of the Lord's mercies that we do not reap eternally the fruits of our sins.

The Lord Himself taught that, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). The fruit of Calvary is seen in His saints, the travail of His soul, as He died and rose again; "the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20).

The very life giving message of the Gospel that reached our souls is that of seed sown and fruit reaped. If the root has fallen into that good ground then there must be fruit unto holiness manifest in the life of the saint.

The principle of sowing and reaping, planting and fruitfulness, labor and increase in the believers life is considered in four aspects in Paul's writings:

SPIRITUALLY.

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). Paul was used of God in planting believers at Corinth, not

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doctrines. In some fields there has been an emphasis on teaching rather than preaching the Gospel and this has resulted in a scarcity of crop to water. Diligent hard labor is involved if we are to see growth, greenery and gratitude which is to the Glory of God. Barrenness, untidiness and weeds are to be seen in the vine yard of the slothful. The increase is of God and what a privilege that He allows us to be laborers together with Him.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23). In this chapter, Paul gives two lists, "The works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19), in contrast to "the fruit of the Spirit". As born of the Spirit we have a power which when operating in us, produces evidence of life. This is not just law keeping but evidence of holiness and sanctity of life which we would never have known in unsaved days. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). Without such a change and evidence of fruit, one would be wise to examine the reality of spiritual like before seeking fellowship in the assembly lest there be something missing at the root.

Paul not only labored in ploughing and planting but he showed sympathizing care for the spiritual growth of the converts. In 1 Cor 3, he is dealing with the party spirit at Corinth. Paul entered the field and through the Gospel saw the plants rooted, Apollos came to water them and God blessed their labors. Thus Paul and Apollos were in happy fellowship working together for the good of the one cultivated field. God in His Sovereignty gives gift to men to do certain work for Him. Others just as godly, He enables to do a different work. Favoritism and party spirit divides the labor force, hinders the work and grieves the Lord of the Harvest.

EXPERIMENTALLY

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). If a farmer sows corn, he expects to reap corn. If he wants a wheat drop he sows wheat. We do not expect to find pears on an apple tree. In life, no man liveth unto

himself and often what we reap bears a close resemblance to the seed we have sown. The believer can sow to the flesh or to the spirit and will in this life, reap accordingly. Jacob deceived his father and was deceived by his own sons. Samson sported with a woman of the Philistines and was himself sport for the Philistines. Saul spared the best of Amalek and an Amalekite boasted of his slaughter on Mount Gilboa. David committed adultery in secret and his own son defiled his concubines on the housetop. Even Paul held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen and was later stoned himself; in early life he sought to bind the saints in prison and he spent his later years in chains. What you sow in early life, you can reap in later life. What is sown in the flesh in secret passion and inward covetousness can yield a harvest publicly in the home and in the family.

"Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). How good to sow the basic seeds of love, joy and peace. Among our brethren, are we marked by long-suffering, gentleness and goodness? Is our behavior marked by the graces of faith, meekness and temperance? If such good seed is sown, we shall in life reap with joy and have reward in the harvest day.

MATERIALLY

"Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn" (1 Cor. 9:9). "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? (1 Cor. 9:11). In these verses the apostle uses two agricultural metaphors. An ill-fed ox will have little strength to tread out the corn and he that ploughs does so in the reasonable expectation of partaking of the crop. We should learn to sow material things for the benefit of others out of love to the Lord, for the Gospel and those who brought it. There is great wisdom in giving up the temporal which we cannot keep to gain the eternal which we cannot lose.

"He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6). The Corinthians had been slow and sparing, having promised a year earlier to send a gift to the poor saints at Jerusalem. The Macedonians has sown bountifully for out of their poverty they

had abounded in their liberality. God gives the seed to sow, dispersal will be to our enrichment since it is God Who has promised a manifold harvest. In the giving of His Son, we have the Divine Gift which inspires all others.

PROPHETICALLY

"The resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44). How often we have stood at the graveside of a saint departed, feeling the coldness, the chilliness, the helplessness which is ours as we face the last enemy. In the coldness of winter the seed lies buried, but we await the warmth of the spring day which is coming when He shall say, "Rise up My love, My fair one". "We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15:51-52). The Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth. The Lord is the Firstfruits Himself and soon the great Harvest, the fruit of Calvary will all be gathered in. "What a gathering that will be!"

"There are three things real –the Cross, the enmity of the world, the love of God."

Spoken by William Kelly before his death.

AMILLENNIALISM

By Wm. Bunting.

IS THERE A NATIONAL FUTURE FOR ISRAEL?

The prophecies concerning the future of the Jews, their land, and the throne of David

their king are so numerous that it would be impossible in the space here available to quote or even refer to more than a few of them.

ISAIAH

Isaiah abounds with promises of Israel's restoration. Whole chapters are devoted to the subject. In ch. 11:11-13, for example, the prophet says: "The Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria ... Egypt ... Pathros ... Cush ... Elam ... Shinar ... Hamath, and from the isles of the sea. And He shall ... assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." Now, the first time the Lord recovered His people was when the two tribes were brought back from Babylon. But here He promises that at "the second, time" He will recover all twelve tribes (Judah, the two; and Ephraim, the ten) and that "from the four corners of the earth", and not merely from Babylon. Then the two alienated parts of the nation will dwell peaceably together. This prophecy has never yet been fulfilled, and it cannot with any consistency be applied spiritually to the Church.

The same subject is dealt with in chapters 27:12, 13; 43:1-8; 49:8-16; 61:1-11; 65:8-10, 17-25; 66:10-24, and other passages in this great Prophecy. Like the portion in ch. 11, they have never yet been fulfilled. They certainly are not being fulfilled in the Church. How could the two verses in ch. 27, for example, be shown to apply to that Organism? Is the Church ever called "Jacob" (43:1)? Were Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba given as "a ransom" for it (v. 3) ? Does the Church "inherit desolate heritages" (49:8) ? What is the "land of her destruction" (49:19), and what are her "wasted cities" (61:4)? Or are these in Heaven or in the Eternal State? Again, has God ever "forsaken" His Church (49:14; 54:7) ? Has He not said to her, "I will never ... in any wise forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5)? We do not deny that in these chapters there is figurative language, and that parts of them may be given a secondary application to the Church,

but surely he must be wilfully blind who cannot here see the future literal regathering of the nation of Israel.

How otherwise are we to understand the last two chapters? Where and when will ch. 65:20 be fulfilled? There will be no "sinner" and no "curse" in Heaven nor in the Eternal State. There, too, "they count not time by years", yet here is "a child . . . an hundred years old." Then verse 25 speaks of the presence of wolves, lambs, lions, and serpents. Would anyone dare to assert that these are in the Church, Heaven, or the Eternal State? How also are we to understand the scene in chapter 66, where there will be one center of worship; where the "Sabbath" and the monthly festivals will be celebrated, where the "priests and levites" will officiate, where there will be a city named "Jerusalem", and outside of it a place of "abhorring unto all flesh"? There is but one answer — the scene is Millennial, and awaits the day of Israel's great home-coming and restoration.

JEREMIAH

The testimony of Jeremiah confirms all this. Those whom the Lord has promised to recover from captivity are termed "Israel", "Judah", "Jacob", and "Ephraim" (30:3, 7; 31:9) — names which never refer to the Church. They are further described as "the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (33:26), and while it is conceded that members of the Body of Christ are the seed of Abraham, they are never named the seed of Isaac or Jacob. Again, when we read, "He that scattereth Israel" (31:10), the allusion cannot be to the spiritual flock of Christ, for it is the wolf and the world that scatter His sheep (John 10:12; Acts 8:1), but never the Good Shepherd; and no instructed Christian surely would speak of the Lord wounding His Church "with the wound of an enemy" (30:14). Moreover, when we read of the people returning to "the land which (God) gave to their fathers" (30:3), of their dwelling again in the cities of Judah (31:24), and when seven well-known landmarks in restored Jerusalem are named (31:38-40), it seems absurd to suggest that it is the Church that is in view. Nonsense, brethren, nonsense! What have the "tower of Hananeel", "the valley of the dead bodies", or the "horse gate" to do with the

Church of the living God! All this is literal language. Your God-given common sense tells you it is. It cannot refer to the Church, and it would be equally preposterous to apply it to Heaven or the Eternal State. It was literal Israel that was "scattered", and it is literal Israel that is to be "gathered" again (31:10).

When the Lord further promises that His people will return from "the uttermost parts of the earth" (31:8, R.V.), that a "great company shall return" (v. 8)—so great indeed that the land will not be large enough to contain them (Is. 49:19, 20; Zech. 10:10), that "they shall all know the Lord" and "enjoy His forgiveness" (31:34), that they shall have "abundance of peace" (33:6), that "Jerusalem shall dwell safely" (v. 16), that they shall "not any more sorrow" (31:12), nor be "thrown down" (31:40), that they shall have no more fear (30:10), that "strangers shall no more serve themselves of them" (30:8), and that they shall then serve "David their king" (30:9), it is obvious that a deliverance far greater than that from Babylon under Ezra is contemplated, as some have suggested. Not one of these twelve statements was then fulfilled. All that is here promised, however, will have a literal and complete accomplishment "in the latter days" (30:24), for the "Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent."

EZEKIEL

Ezekiel in like manner bears his quota of testimony. The Good Shepherd will "seek out His sheep and deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered", and will "bring them to their own land" (34:12, 13). Never again will they be under the Gentile yoke (v. 28). Chapter 36:1-15 describes the restoration of the Land; and verses 16-38, the moral cleansing of the Nation. The National Restoration of "the whole house of Israel" follows in 37:1-14, and then in verses 15-25 the reunion of the ten tribes

and the two tribes takes place, "and my servant David shall be their prince for ever" (v. 2).

(from "Assembly Testimony, Nov/Dec 1962.
To be continued).

Assembly Autonomy

Bentley, Tom

No subject has provoked so much thought over the years of testimony, as the one that we are considering in this article. To ask the question, "Is the local assembly autonomous?" will in these days draw forth a variety of answers. Not everyone accepts that an affirmative answer complies with New Testament teaching. Some may concede to a relative form of autonomy. It is therefore essential that we come to the Word of God and make a fresh inquiry into its teaching on this vital issue.

Christendom will not aid our inquiry, except to veer us away to the variable forms of centralized control, which have multiplied under its pretext of unity. Nor will a review of early "brethren" practices offer acceptable guidance. Sadly, it was on this very subject that those blessed early days of recovered testimony and truth were quickly overcast with division and discord. Central control appeared, for it attracts and offers a ready answer to issues not easily settled. Any form of centralized government among assemblies of the saints is but a reflection of the identifiable features of Babylon. Much of this obtains in assembly testimony today, sad to say. Under the label of protecting property, organizing funds, distributing of gifts, huge enterprises have developed, something which in effect, ultimately leads to central control, if not held in proper restraint.

An assembly, having its own responsible brethren who are capable of attending to the spiritual needs of the flock, should surely be wholly responsible for its property. The control of the material ought to be in the hands of the spiritual. With this in view, local trusts, conforming as they do to the principle of assembly autonomy, are both acceptable and practical rather than either central or regional foundations.

God's ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind.

J.N. Darby

Some servants working in foreign lands, where their desire has been to control the work of the Lord, have left a tragic legacy. Many beloved saints were not brought to appreciate the precious liberty they have in the Lord, or even to understand that this liberty extends to the spiritual and practical independency of the assembly. Hence they were deprived of exercising their responsibilities to the full, due to imposed schemes which were contrived to control both their actions and their thinking. Missionary men were arbitrarily accorded power of attorney by foundations that actually were handed ownership of assembly property. They could speak of "holding the key," which acted as a threat to any action of which they did not approve even though such an action was the united decision of the assembly concerned. As result of this, the concept of assembly autonomy was obliterated, if indeed, it ever existed in the regions concerned. There is no point in decrying the unprincipled actions and unscriptural practices of Christendom, while among us as assemblies of the Lord's people such practices are prevalent.

THE TRUTH OF INDEPENDENCY.

By "independency" we simply mean, "self-government," a truth which is vital to assembly testimony. The opposite of this is what we have been discussing above: confederation, which involves the government of others. As a principle it derives its basis from the scriptural concept of what is generally termed, the local church, or if it be more preferable, the church in a locality, such as the "church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2). Most are aware that in the NT there are two aspects of the use of the word "church" which relate to the subject. There is the Dispensational aspect (Matt 16:18) which is confirmed by the use the apostle makes of the same word in his Epistle to the Ephesians where he uses the word nine times. Then there is the Local aspect (Matt 18:15 - 20) which is clearly discernible in the writings of Paul to the Corinthians, for example. The concept of a universal church, or a national or a regional church, composed of member churches, does not enter into the framework of divine revelation. Nothing in the epistles conveys the idea that the church is made up of a

plurality of churches. Therefore the Scriptures know nothing of a "unity" maintained by ecclesiastical measures that establish an inter-church organization. The truth of independency is recognized in an assembly that stands wholly responsible to the Lord for the exercise of its gift and government, its services and its sanctions. It acts corporately as being responsive to Heaven (Matt 18:18 See Mr. Newberry's tense signs, indicating that it is not heaven acknowledging what earth has done, but rather, earth conforming to what heaven has already done.)

The **Proof** of Independency is to be found in Revelation chapters 1 to 3. Here the churches, which were located throughout the area as testimonies to the risen Lord, are viewed as lampstands. The character of the testimony in Israel's day is reflected in the seven-branched lampstand of the Tabernacle, ten of which, too, were in the Temple later. The lampstands in Revelation, however, are individual and independent assemblies, each wholly and directly responsible to the One who is described as "walking among the seven golden lampstands." It is contributory to a proper assessment of the subject to observe that the word "church" is in the plural throughout these three chapters. Had there been a confederation, the singular form would have obtained, but it is "churches," else the message would have been as one, but again it is "messages." Had centralization existed, the respective churches would have been responsible to a representative body legislating for the region, which obtains in practically every form of Christendom today. Again, the removal of a church would have been the action of the controlling body, with centralized power to act. It is true that an individual believer can be "put out" of an assembly, but an assembly is part of no visible body from which it can be expelled under the welcome terms of the truth of God in the New Testament. Obviously, had the opposite existed, then the term "church of Asia" would be appropriate under such provisions, but this is not the language of the Spirit of God. It is the "churches of Asia."

The **Practice** of Independency is an open condemnation of every form of confederacy. To explain: Confederation is a permanent union for the purpose of common external

action. What is the Basis of Confederation? It finds its origin in the concept that the Church is to have a visible unity on earth. If this is to be realized and maintained, local churches must unite and those failing to comply will be expelled or will no longer be recognized. G. V. Wigram on seeing the first print of a list of assemblies, said, "It sounds the death knell of the truth." The work with which the writer has been happily associated in the country of labor for forty-five years does not appear on any existent list of assembly address books nationally. Are we then non-existent? The comforting factor must surely be, He knows our location. What is the Bane of Confederation? It has brought into existence organized Christendom. It did not commence yesterday. Its historical beginnings reach back into the sub-apostolic period. That the reader may have recourse into valued evidence of this intrusion in primitive church life, the writer recommends, if he may, a book by Edwin Hatch (1889) called "The Organization of the Early Christian Churches", which was boycotted by the Anglican System. The late Mr. Frank Holmes, who was a cleric in the aforementioned system, spoke of the invaluable help this book offered him at a time when he was exercised about gathering to the Lord's name outside the camp. The Banishment of Confederation is sure. The day will come when heaven will ring with the triumphant cry, "Babylon the Great is fallen."

The **Preservative Power** of Independency is manifest in an assemblies maintenance of that scriptural path of testimony. It preserves remarkably from political interference. Once something huge appears, it attracts the eye of those that are hostile to the truth of God. What has outlived the massive organized systems in countries where open opposition to the testimony is rife, has been the simple local church approach.

THE TESTS OF INDEPENDENCY

There are at least three issues that test the practice of Independency.

1. The Matter of Disagreement

The only link that exists between assemblies is a spiritual fellowship because of kindred thought, teaching, and practice. Often some

measure of disagreement arises, which can test the relationship between assemblies, especially those in a particular area. Naturally, a tendency to swift action urges some form of arbitrary excision. Remember, though, that there is nothing from which an assembly can be excised. On the other hand, no principle should be compromised just so that links can be maintained. Love would seek at all costs, except that of principle, to promote and to preserve relations with such as are gathered to the Lords name.

2. The Matter of Discipline

Discipline is the prerogative of each independent assembly (Matt 18:18; 1 Cor 5:4 – 5) and must be exercised according to the Word of God. Whether it be so, or not, the particular assembly involved stands wholly responsible to the Lord for its action. If, however, discipline is carried out without regard to Scriptural principles, after a thorough and careful evaluation, other assemblies may feel that such action is unworthy of recognition, and refuse to honor it. They are also acting in responsibility to the Lord. It is just at this point that the whole framework of independency rests and is often tested. To resort to excision is both unjust and unscriptural and without precedent in the New Testament. When John the apostle and his followers were ostracized by the despotic Diotrephes, were they left high and dry without the sympathetic fellowship of other assemblies? The wise judge otherwise.

3. The Matter of Doctrine

Even were an assembly to go beyond the bounds of truth, there is no ground for excision. Such an assembly stands responsible to the Lord. If, however, the conscience of another assembly feels there can no longer be inter-assembly activity or fellowship, then it acts according to its responsibility before the Lord. But, to form a group or circle of fellowship of assemblies and cut off another assembly is neither scriptural nor spiritual. Admittedly, the tests of independency are great.

THE TESTIMONY OF INDEPENDENCY

It reveals Gods purpose for testimony. Seven is a symbolic number; it stands for complete-

ness. Certainly it has to be acknowledged that God saw the nations could be fully evangelized by local churches. Hence the "seven churches of Asia," for surely there were more than this in the area mentioned. The number symbolizes the sufficiency of assembly testimony if only it were recognized. Therefore, independent companies of Gods People act as light-bearers to a dark world around them.

*I knelt in tears at the feet of Christ,
In the hush of the twilight dim,
And all that I was or hoped or sought,
I surrendered unto Him.
Crown'd, not crucified! my heart shall know
No King but Christ, who loveth me so.*

Anonymous.

Misrepresenting Christ

"But ye have not so learned Christ." "But ye did not so learn Christ" (Eph. 4:20, R. V.).

"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts,
known and read of all men."

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 3:2; 5:17)

In the first passage Paul indicates that some were misrepresenting Christ, because "Ye did not so learn Christ." The second passage indicates that a truly converted person is a new creation and should be through with the old life and its sins. The world looks to Christians for higher standards, ideals, and the exemplification of the Christ life within and without. Every observer may not see the halo of Divine glory about the heads of those who profess to live the Christian life, but they expect to see the Christians so different from themselves and other unsaved people.

Most Christian people wish to properly represent Christ before men. This means a represen-

tation of Christ Himself in human lives to present a somewhat similar likeness to Him. How do Christians sometimes misrepresent Christ, their Lord?

As to place, Christians may misrepresent Christ almost anywhere. They may fail to show forth the Christlikeness in the home, or the street, in their business dealings, in the office or factory, or even in religious meetings in the House of God.

Christians may misrepresent Christ by unkindness, discourtesy, unfairness in minor matters, by carelessness and thoughtlessness about other people's rights and feelings. They may misrepresent Christ by being too much like the world. Dr. Bonar once said: "look for the Church and find it in the world, I look for the world and find it in the Church." The line of demarcation is not definite enough for Christians today.

Christians misrepresent Christ by a backward timidity, fear, and false modesty in standing up for God and the truth. Christ was no coward and He truly defended the truth and the helpless masses. Christians may misrepresent Christ by foolish talking, frivolity, low jesting, and vulgar actions. There is too much of this among professing Christians. Cheerfulness, joyfulness, and true happiness is to be commended, but these are so different from foolish jesting which the Scriptures forbid (Eph. 5:4). If youth, and adults too, only knew how much such jesting and foolishness "ills" and grieves the life of the Spirit, they would quit it like a bad habit.

Christian girls and women may misrepresent Christ by their worldly dress, their artificiality of personality, and their superficiality in daily living. Take your styles from Christ and the Bible, not from the fashion shops of Paris, London, and New York! (1 Peter 3:3, 4; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10). Does your life, your dress, your manner ever attract anyone to say: "There is a real Christian man or woman, if there ever was one!"

Some Christians are judged largely by the company they keep; is yours saved or unsaved, worldly, or unworldly? Do they love the spiritual things or are they adverse to them? Beware lest worldly companions draw you away with them, for Paul said: "Evil company doth corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33, R. V.). Christ is judged by your life, by your spiritual or carnal walk before men. Do you frequent places where His Name is unwelcome? Do you walk in a carnal manner before

men? "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). None need fear that they will ever be perfect in this life, but we should strive by His grace to please Him.

Some people misrepresent Christ by doubting His providence, by anxiety, worry, fretfulness, and needless care—as if Christ was not in power in His Kingdom sufficiently to care for all of them.

"Take heed unto thyself," said Paul. If we all will do that, we will not so unjustly condemn and criticize others. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

The remedy for such misrepresentation of Christ by professed Christians, would be to surrender their lives, their tongues, and their future, entirely to Christ, seeking His complete control. He will take possession of His own. He will abide in the humble heart. He will give the weakest the victory they crave, for "We will triumph in Thy victory." Walk in total dependence upon Him. Live a life of obedience to His revealed will. "Whatsoever He bids you do, do it." "To obey is better than sacrifice." Sit at the feet of Jesus Christ and learn from Him. He excels all other universities combined. Look to Jesus Christ for faith, hope, love, and strength to live the Christian life. He never misrepresents Himself in any life, therefore allow Christ to live His life in you, so that you may truly say with Paul, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me."

"Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." "Be filled with the Spirit." "Rejoice in the Lord always." "Pray without ceasing." Seek the fellowship of Christ and His people, but flee from sinners who would entice you.

Remember there is great reward to the ambassadors who truly represent their Lord and His message to men, even in the face of opposition. Ours is the duty, the obligation, the privilege, and the responsibility of so doing. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," said the Lord.

WIS Apr 1941

Psalm One

The Blessed Man:

His negative and positive life. Some people's lives are all negative and no positive, that

Horatious Bonar (1808-89) said many years ago, "I looked for the church and I found it in the world; I looked for the world and I found it in the church."

Imagine what his reaction would be if he were here today! Occupation with wordly things so consumed Noah's generation that the flood came upon them in swift judgment. In our time it is possible that a similar occupation with worldliness and materialism may so grip us that we fail utterly in our Christian service. Let it not be so!

W. Ross Rainey

is, they don't do much wrong, but they do little or no good. Negative Christianity is a poor thing, and savors of Pharisaism, but Scriptural Christianity is positive; it is active.

The Blessed Man is a Separated Man:

"Walks not in the counsel of the ungodly". Three examples.

1. Our blessed Lord was undoubtedly this blessed Man and we believe this Psalm has its first application to Him. The Devil tried to get Him to walk according to his ungodly counsel, but He refused. He took the Lord to the pinnacle of the temple, and then to a high mountain, telling Him to fall down and worship him and he would give the kingdoms of the world to Him.- But the Lord refused to do so. He would not walk in this ungodly counsel. Here Adam and Eve failed.

2. Enoch is the first man whose walk is mentioned in Scripture, and thank God he was a happy man for he walked not in the counsel of the ungodly. We read he walked with God, and one day while doing so, God took him home to Heaven, there to walk with Him forever. God loved the company of Enoch, and Enoch loved God's company so well, that God took him home to Heaven without dying, for he pleased God.

3. Noah is the other and next man in the Bible of whom it is said he walked with God. The word translated walk here in connection with Enoch and Noah means to walk habitually, not now and then, but constantly. Think of the

time when these men walked with God. They did so in days of terrible apostasy and declension. They did so when there were none else doing so. When all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth, when violence and wickedness was rampant, so this should encourage us, for Jesus said that, what characterized the days of Noah would characterize our days and is characterizing them. But in the midst of appalling apostasy we may, like Enoch and Noah, walk with God. This is our privilege and our responsibility. So Enoch and Noah were like the happy man of Psalm 1, they were separated men standing aloof from the corruption all around them.

Some who did walk in counsel of the Ungodly:

2 Chron. 18:1. Jehoshaphat, alas walked in the ungodly counsel of the wicked king of Israel. First he went to visit him, then he listened to him, and when Ahab counseled him about going to battle with him he went, but for God's mercy he would have lost his life. Many a Christian has lost their Christian life through walking in the counsel of the ungodly.

2 Chron. 22:3. Ahaziah walked in the wicked ungodly counsel of his mother. We read: He did wickedly for his mother was his counselor. Think of a mother giving ungodly counsel. Many a father and mother have done this, some counseling their children against accepting Christ, others against following the Lord in baptism, and gathering to His Name.

Peter stood in the way of sinners and denied his Lord.

Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. Contrast Abram sitting in his tent door.

The Blessed Man is a Studious Man:

He delights in the law of the Lord. God would have us all to be studious. We are exhorted to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, and if we are to be happy we must delight in God's Word. Job, Jeremiah and Joshua all did so. Job said he esteemed the Word of God more than his necessary food. Jeremiah said he ate God's Word and to him it was sweet. David said sweeter to him was the Word of God than honey in the

honey comb. Has God's Word lost its sweetness to your soul? Then get into His presence and find out the cause and confess the sin that has robbed you of your relish for it.

We should read God's letters over and over again, studying them till we are able to rightly divide the truth. What enabled David to overcome the severe trials that he endured? It was God's Word; he said, "Thy law is within my heart." A good place for a good thing.

The Happy Man is a Fruitful Man:

"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water bringing forth his fruit in his season"

As we have said the first half of this Psalm brings Christ before us. How fruitful that life of His was! Yielding fruit to God continually. He was the true vine whose fruit gladdened the heart of God and man. A root out of the dry ground, a tender plant for God. Joseph was as a bough by a well, and his branches ran over the wall. Oh, like Joseph, may we abide by the deep sweet well of love. Abide in Christ, may the roots of our faith strike deep into His love, His grace, that we too shall be like Him, and be fruitful, bringing forth fruit in season. Galatians 5; John 15.

The Happy Man is a Fresh Man:

"His leaf also shall not wither." Christ was God's great evergreen. We too should be fresh in soul, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Of Moses it is recorded when 120 years old that his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated, he was fresh for God. It is nice to see young Christians with the dew of their youth upon them, but better still to see old Christians after weathering many a storm still fresh for God. Andrew Frazer said he would rather have a happy soul than \$5000.

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*It is a hard thing for a proud man to say, "I have been wrong," but it is one mark of a morally great mind to frankly own and confess it. A Christian man may walk for a time in his pride, but God knows *how and when* to humble him.*

Walter Scott